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ANNE RICE'S SERVANT OF THE BONES



Black & White

ANNE RICE'S SERVANT OF THE BONES

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Signed Edition
Art by Rene DeLiz
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Lettering by Shawn Lee • Edited by Chris Ryall and Mariah Huehner

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PSALM 137

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat
down, yea, we wept, when we
remembered Zion.

We hanged out harps upon the willows
in our midst thereof.

For there they that carried us away
captive required of us a song; and they
that wasted us *required of us mirth,*
saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song
in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my
right hand forget *her cunning.*

If I do not remember thee, let my
tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, the children of
Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said,
Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation
thereof.

O daughter of Babylon, who are to be
destroyed; happy *shall be* *be*, that
rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.
Happy *shall be* *be*, that taketh and
dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

PROEM.

MURDERED.

I KNEW HER.

ESTHER.
ESTHER BELKIN.

SHE'D BEEN A STUDENT ONCE
IN MY CLASS. ESTHER. RICH
AND LOVELY TO BEHOLD.



IT WAS TIME FOR ME
TO STOP TEACHING.

I WENT TO WRITE MY BOOK.
I HADN'T SO MUCH AS
OFFERED A PRAYER TO
ESTHER BELKIN'S MEMORY...

...BUT I AM A
HISTORIAN AND NOT
A PRAYING MAN.

HER DEATH CAME AFTER
ME, VIVID AND LUSH WITH
MEANING, THROUGH THE
WORDS OF ANOTHER.





THIS IS AZIBEL'S TALE
AS HE TOLD IT TO ME.

CALL ME JONATHAN, AS
HE DID. I AM THE SCRIBE.

AND IF HE HADN'T COME TO
SEEK A SCRIBE, I WOULD
HAVE DIED BY MORNING.



HE KNEW WHO I
WAS; HE KNEW
ALL MY WORKS.

IT WAS NO HAPHAZARD
CHOICE THAT MADE HIM
CLIMB, CARRYING ONLY A
CURLED NEWSMAGAZINE.



UNDERSTAND, I AM
NOT INSANE OR
EVEN ECCENTRIC.

I HAVE NEVER BEEN
SELF-DESTRUCTIVE.

I SOUGHT THE
ABSOLUTE
SOLITUDE OF MY
NORTHERN HOME
TO WORK ON MY
BOOK. THEN THE
STORM CAME.



THE FEVER TOOK
ME COMPLETELY
BY SURPRISE.

I REMEMBER.
KNOWING I WAS VERY
MUCH IN DANGER.

WHIPPPPPSHHH

SLAM

ANNE RICE'S
SERVANT OF THE BONES

The Scribe

Created by Anne Rice
Adaptation by Mariah McCourt
Art by Rensae DeLiz & Ray Dillon

I AM
GOING TO
DIE.

NO, YOU
WON'T,
JONATHAN.



BY THE LIGHT OF THE
FIRE, HE APPEARED TO
BE A KIND YOUNG MAN.

BUT HIS COAT WOULD
BECOME TOO LARGE FOR
HIM. HE WOULD CHANGE.



IT WAS THIS MIRACLE I
WITNESSED EARLY ON,
EVEN BEFORE I KNEW
WHO HE WAS.





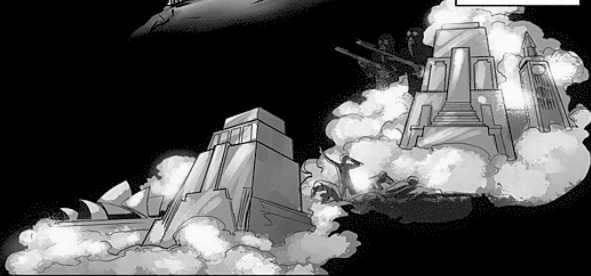
EVEN BEFORE THE DEATH
OF ESTHER BELKIN, AND
THE SCANDAL AT THE
TEMPLE OF MIND AFTER...

...THE DECADE WAS
A FEAST OF WARS.

I RAN FROM THIS AS
MUCH AS ANYTHING.

SO YOU SEE, I AM
NOT STUPID. JUST
A SCHOLAR.

I THOUGHT IT WOULD
BE A STORM LIKE
ANY OTHER.



I BLESSED HIM.

IT IS ONLY
KINDNESS,
JONATHAN.



THE
BROTH, YOU
MUST.

IT WAS BY WATER
AND BROTH THAT
HE BROUGHT ME
BACK SLOWLY.



THE WATER. THE
WATER HE GAVE
ME PERPETUALLY.

IS THERE
ENOUGH
FOR ME?



OF COURSE,
MY FRIEND.
DEAR GOD,
TAKE ANYTHING
YOU WANT.



HE TOLD ME
WATER WAS ALL
HE NEEDED NOW.



ONCE AGAIN THE
STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN
HAD DISAPPEARED AND
LEFT HIM STRANDED.

MY NAME
IS AZRIEL.



THEY CALLED
ME THE SERVANT
OF THE BONES.
BUT I BECAME A
REBEL GHOST.



"A BITTER AND
IMPUDENT GENII."





I KILLED
THAT MAN.



I TURNED TO LOOK AT HIM
AND IT WAS THEN THAT I
FIRST SAW THE MIRACLE.

HE WANTED ME
TO SEE IT.



IT WAS THE
WAY I LOOKED
ON THE DAY I
MADE MY
CHOICE.

TO FORFEIT
MY POWERS
FOREVER; TO
TAKE ON REAL
FLESH AND
SUFFERING.

I LOOKED
JUST LIKE
GREGORY
WHEN I SHOT
HIM.

I THOUGHT I
WOULD LOOK
THAT WAY
FOREVER.

I THOUGHT I
WOULD DIE IN
THAT FORM.





BUT THE
TEMPLE OF THE
MIND LIES IN RUINS.
THE PEOPLE WILL
NOT DIE.

THE WOMEN
AND CHILDREN
WILL NOT FALL
ON THE ROAD,
BREATHE THE
EVIL GAS.

BUT I
DIDN'T DIE. I
AM AZRIEL
AGAIN.



YOU'RE
A LIVING,
BREATHING
MAN.

I DON'T KNOW
HOW YOU MADE
YOURSELF LOOK
LIKE GREGORY
BELKIN.



NO, NOT
A MAN—A
GHOST.

WHY DID
GOD DO THIS
TO ME?

I AM NOT
INNOCENT. I
HAVE SINNED.
WHY CAN'T
I DIE?



MAYBE GOD
LET ME LIVE
TO SAVE YOU,
JONATHAN.

HE GAVE
ME MY OLD
FLESH SO I
COULD CLIMB
THIS MOUNTAIN.
TELL YOU ALL
THIS.

PERHAPS,
AZRIEL.



REST
NOW. I'LL
WATCH AND
I'LL WAIT.

IF YOU SEE
ME TURN INTO
THAT MAN AGAIN,
IT IS ONLY THAT
I AM TRYING TO
MEASURE THE
DIFFICULTY
OF IT.



IT'S HARD
NOW TO BE
ANYTHING BUT
THE YOUNG
MAN I WAS.

WHEN
I BOUGHT
THEIR LIES.

WHEN I
BECAME THE
GHOST, NOT THE
MARTYR THEY
PROMISED.



I WOULD
BE DEAD
WITHOUT
YOU.

YES, THAT
MUCH IS
TRUE, ISN'T
IT?

I HAD MY
FOOT ON THE
LADDER TO
HEAVEN, BUT I
MADE THIS
CHOICE.





I THOUGHT
THAT WHEN THIS
WAS ALL OVER,
THE TEMPLE
DESTROYED, THE
STAIRWAY MIGHT
COME AGAIN.

THE HASIDIM
ARE PURE
AND INNOCENT.
THEY ARE
GOOD.

BATTLES
THEY MUST
LEAVE TO
MONSTERS
LIKE ME.

I REMEMBERED FRAGMENTS.



GREGORY
BELKIN... AND
THERE WAS THAT
BEAUTIFUL
GIRL.

ESTHER.



THAT'S
YOU.

SHE
DIED THERE,
ESTHER, HIS
DAUGHTER.



SHE HAD BEEN A
GOOD STUDENT,
SERIOUS,
MODEST, ALERT.



SHE WAS A
SWEET, KIND
GIRL, WASN'T
SHE?

VERY
MUCH SO, VERY
UNLIKE HER
STEFFATHER.



THE GHOST,
THE SERVANT
OF THE
BONES.

VISIBLE IN
MY GRIEF

I WILL NEVER
KNOW WHO CALLED
ME, MAYBE IT WAS
ONLY HER DEATH, THE
DARK HORRIBLE
BEAUTY OF IT.

A black and white illustration of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair. She is wearing a dark, long-sleeved top over a light-colored tank top. She is holding a newspaper in front of her chest with both hands. The background is dark and indistinct.

WHAT IS
TO BECOME
OF ME,
JONATHAN?

AS I GROW
STRONGER IN THIS
SEEMING HUMAN
FORM, I FEAR I
CAN'T DIE. THAT I
WILL NEVER.

A black and white illustration of a man in a dark room, looking up at a woman who is standing in the background. The man is in the foreground, his face partially illuminated. The woman is in the background, her figure mostly in shadow. There is a bright light source on the right side of the frame.

AZRIEL, YOU
MUST TELL ME
EVERYTHING.

EVERYTHING?
OH, I WANT TO.
I WANT TO.

A black and white illustration of a man and a woman walking in a dark room. The woman is on the left, wearing a dark dress, and the man is on the right, wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants. They are walking towards the right. The room has a stone floor and a window on the left.

LATER, I WAS
ABLE TO WALK
AROUND WITHOUT
DIZZINESS.

A black and white illustration of a close-up of a woman's face. She is lying down, and her head is resting on a surface. Her eyes are open, and she is looking towards the viewer. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows.

WHEN I AWOKE THE
NEXT AFTERNOON, I
WAS CLEAR-HEADED.
MYSELF.



I WAS HAPPY.
UNCOMMONLY
HAPPY.



I SHOWED HIM HOW
TO MAKE COWBOY
COFFEE, AND I
DRANK PLENTY OF
IT.



WHY
DON'T YOU
EAT?

MY BODY
WOULD NOT
TAKE IT. IT'S
NOT HUMAN.



I THOUGHT HE
MIGHT OPEN
THE DOOR ONTO
THE STORM.

AFTER ALL HE HAD
DONE, IF HE WANTED
TO SEE THE SNOW, I
WOULD NOT DENY HIM
ANYTHING.

BUT HE LIFTED HIS
ARMS AND WITHOUT
THE DOOR BEING
OPENED...



...THERE CAME A
BLAST OF WIND AND
HIS FIGURE PALED.



SPELLBOUND, I ROSE
FROM MY PLACE BY THE
FIRE. HE WAS NOWHERE
TO BE SEEN.



WHEN THE WIND
CAME AGAIN, IT
WAS A HOT BLAST.



WILL I NEVER
BE *NEFESH*?
THAT IS, BODY
AND SOUL
TOGETHER?

I LOOKED AT HER, IN THIS
RECURRENT STORY OF ESTHER'S
DEATH, RETOLD ONLY BECAUSE
OF GREGORY'S DOWNFALL.

HE KILLED
HER, DIDN'T HE?
IT WAS THE FIRST
ASSASSINATION.

YES.

THERE WAS
NO DOUBT TO
DIE IN HER PLACE.
HE KILLED HIS OWN
STEPDAUGHTER.

THAT'S WHEN I CAME OUT
OF THE DARKNESS AS IF
CALLED BY A SORCERER,
ONLY THERE WAS
NONE.

I APPEARED
ONLY TO
WITNESS HER
CRUEL DEATH.

TO KILL
THOSE WHO
KILLED HER.

"THE THREE MEN
WHO STABBED HER?"

BUT HE DID NOT
ANSWER, AND I
REMEMBERED.

THEY HAD BEEN
STABBED ONLY
A BLOCK AWAY,
WITH THEIR
OWN ICE PICKS.

I THOUGHT IT
WAS PART OF THE
PLOT. SHE WAS KILLED
BY TERRORISTS, HE
SAID, AND THEN HE
DISPOSED OF THEM TO
MAKE THE LIE BIGGER
AND BIGGER.

"NO, THEY WERE
TO GET AWAY. I
KILLED THEM."







TELL
ME.

AND LET
ME SAY FIRST,
YOU LOOK LIKE
A YOUNG MAN,
NO MORE THAN
TWENTY.



"YOU HAVE A HAIRY CHEST AND
ARMS—IT'S DARK AND HEALTHY.
YOUR SKIN IS OLIVE.

"THE HAIR ON YOUR
HEAD IS LUSTROUS.

"AND, I WOULD THINK,
THE ENVY OF WOMEN."



THEY LIKE
TO TOUCH IT.

I TRUST YOU. I
DON'T KNOW WHY
I SHOULD, BUT YOU
SAVED MY LIFE AND
I TRUST YOU.

I HAVE SEEN
YOU CHANGE INTO
ANOTHER MAN.
LATER I WILL THINK
I DREAMT IT.

NOW WE
CAN BEGIN.



FORGET
THIS ROOM,
FORGET THIS
TIME.

GO TO THE
BEGINNING
FOR ME, WILL
YOU?

TELL ME
WHAT A GHOST
KNOWS, HOW A GHOST
BEGINS, WHAT A GHOST
REMEMBERS OF
THE LIVING...



... BUT NO,
I HAVE MADE
MY WORST
MISTAKE.

AND WHAT
IS THAT?

YOU HAVE A
TALE YOU WANT
TO TELL AND
YOU SHOULD
TELL IT.



KINDLY
TEACHER, LET'S
DRAW A LITTLE
CLOSER.

I HAVE
CHOSEN YOUR
LANGUAGE—THE
LANGUAGE OF
A GHOST.



THERE WILL
BE TIMES WHEN I
FORGET, YOU MUST
BRING ME BACK.
BRING ME BACK
QUICKLY.

I WILL.



NOTHING WAS EVER THE
SAME AFTERWARDS.

HE BEGAN.

TO BE CONTINUED...



THE BONES OF WOE

Golden are the bones of woe.
Their brilliance has no place to go.
It plunges inward,
Spikes through snow.

Of weeping fathers whom we drink
And mother's milk and final stink
We can dream but cannot think.
Golden bones encrust the brink.

Golden silver copper silk,
Woe is water shocked by milk.
Heart attack, assassin, cancer.
Who would think these bones such dancers.

Golden are the bones of woe.
Skeleton holds skeleton.
Words of ghosts are not to know.
Ignorance is what we learn.

Stan Rice, *Some Lamb* 1975

SERVANT OF THE BONES

Guys, dolls, transsexuals, extraterrestrials and all of the readers: Well, here it is! SERVANT OF THE BONES brought to you in this gorgeous graphic novel.

You know, I was really thrilled with SERVANT. This story was tremendously exciting for me to write because, as you may or may not be aware, it was my first novel involving a ghost. It was a book I wrote that had no involvement with either vampires or witches. Those supernatural heroes I have loved with great devotion, but writing about ghosts and hauntings without my beloved Lestar or Lasher or the Mayfair clan was a breath of fresh air! Coming from New Orleans, I grew up hearing good old-fashioned ghost stories. And a ghost story this is!

Of course, I never write a story unless it comes to me like a swarm of bees surrounding my head. The preparation was unlike any other. For years I have had a passion for archeology. I go to great lengths to be as historically accurate as possible. The research I conducted for SERVANT OF THE BONES was extensive. I studied the Hebrew exile in Babylon; I studied ancient Sumer and the Temple of Marduk; I also visited Jerusalem and encountered many Jewish readers who provided good and honest answers to my endless questions. I yearned then as I still do today to make all aspects of my writing as real as possible.

To bring history into focus, during the time I wrote SERVANT, there was much global turmoil. The subtext of the story speaks about the differences and similarities between East and West. In a sense I was saying that, although we can be politically, economically, spiritually divided, we have a kind of oneness in a shared sense of Gothic lore. I was saying that both cultures are truly united in loving the beauty of form and movement, loving goose bumps on the back of your neck, loving a good ghost story!

The characters were an obsession for me. Esther was not the inspiration for the story, but she was the catalyst for the narrative. I liked her character a great deal. For a time I actually walked in Esther's shoes. I visited the diamond district in New York city. I spoke with several merchants; I listened to how they talked to me; I observed how they interacted with other haggling clientele. I found a lovely necklace that Esther would have liked, though nowhere near as expensive as one she would have purchased. But I had to have such rituals. I had to have something that she would have had. It helped me know her better.

Gregory Belkin, the villain, had what we called in my family "black Irish" blood, a reference to the Elizabethan period when the Spanish Armada crash landed on the Irish coast and intermarried with the locals, thoroughly mixing the gene pool. That was the idea behind Gregory Belkin, with his pure black eyes. His black Irish blood didn't make him sinister; they made his villainous features more attractive and believable.

But Azriel was my dark hero in this story, and his character began with his name. I love to investigate the root and meaning of names. No good name in any of my stories is an accident, and Azriel certainly fell into that category. I chose his name because it was very common for BC Hebrews, and also because it seemed very uncommon for the modern English-speaker; the name was beautiful and mysterious; and for me at least, it described my dark new hero character perfectly. I found myself haunted by the idea that Azriel has all of Lestar's courage, but is liberated from the curse of the vampires. Azriel is locked out of heaven, an outcast among us in search of his own soul. He is a true ghost and there are things that Azriel can do that Lestar can't do and I have the eerie feeling that I fell in love with Azriel the way I was in love with Lestar.

If this sounds like a sales pitch, what can I do but burst into tears! I'd love you to read about my heroes -- I want you to love my ghost in this absolutely amazing graphic novel retelling.

Love to all,
Anne Rice
June 2011

Edited by
Becket Ghoto

IDW PUBLISHING IN AUGUST: COUNTING DOWN

Musings & Hot Mustard from IDW's Director of Retail Marketing, Dirk Wood

HOT AUGUST NIGHTS!

That's right, you crazy nuts, the hot and humid nights of August are here. Simmering sidewalks, sweltering houses... How does one beat the heat?

Have no fear! I have a plan, and it's foolproof. First, take off your shoes and your necktie (optional). If possible, put on a mesh tank top. Take a large bag of frozen peas, and stuff them into your underpants. Then, retire to a cool place with a breeze, like your front porch or an air-conditioned bus station, to sit and enjoy a cool beverage. Voila! Just one last thing, make sure and bring a stack of the latest and greatest IDW comics!



I hate telling people what to read first, but if I were you, I'd begin with this month's huge release, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* #11! Original co-creator **Kevin Eastman** is back and the Turtles are ready for a whole new generation!

Next up, it's time to peel open your copy of *Dungeons & Dragons: Drizzt* #1! Best-selling author **R.A. Salvatore** is bringing the most popular character from *Forgotten Realms* to

comics, and this story leads directly into the next *Neverwinter* novel!

Top it off with a trip down to the Big Easy! The creative team behind the first *True Blood* comic series is back, and they're taking Bill and Sookie down to New Orleans to track down a killer... It's another sexy and original adventure based on the HBO mega-hit created by **Alan Ball**.

Wait a minute. Just when I'm trying to get you cooled off, I make you read a steamy, sweaty comic set in the Deep South. Ah,

well, sounds like summer to me! Hopefully, that mesh shirt will help.

Stay cool everybody...

-Dirk

Dirk Wood
Director, Retail Marketing

IDW



AUGUST RELEASES FROM IDW PUBLISHING

COMICS • COMICS • COMICS • COMICS • COMICS • COMICS • COMICS • COMICS

100 Penny Press: Doctor Who Vol. 2 #1
30 Days of Night: Night, Again #4
Anne Rice's Servant of the Bones #1
Cobra #4
Crawl To Me #2
Crysis #3
Doctor Who #8
Doctor Who Annual 2011
Duke Nukem: Glorious Bastard #2
Dungeons & Dragons #10
Dungeons & Dragons:
Forgotten Realms: Drizzt #1
G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero #169
G.I. Joe: Ongoing #4
Godzilla 100-Cover Charity Spectacular
Godzilla: Gangsters & Goliaths #3
Godzilla: Kingdom of Monsters #6
Infestation: Outbreak #3
John Byrne's Next Men #9
Locke & Key: Clockworks #2
Rocketeer Adventures #4

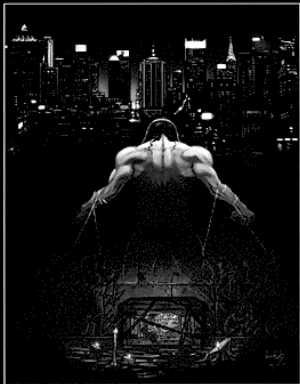
Snake Eyes #4
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #11
That Hellbound Train #3
Transformers #23
Transformers #24
True Blood: The French Quarter #1
Wynonna Earp: The Yeti Wars #4



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—Anne Rice
From her introduction

Cover by Renae DeLiz

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